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Reno Public Meeting
October 4, 2001

CHARLES LAWS: Thank you very much.

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552271

2 My name is Charles Laws, L-a-w-s. I'm a
3 retired environmental engineer, a nuclear veteran, I have
4 a degree in biochemistry, spent some time with the
5 military and others, used radioactive materials as tracer
6 chemicals in 1952 in chemical studies. That was before
7 there was developed a biophysical department in any
8 university. It was at a time when we were through the
9 AEC and through what I would say profit-oriented
10 individuals who thought they had a source of energy to
11 deal with, very enthusiastic. We were very naive.

12 I am, as I mentioned, a nuclear veteran, one
13 of the very few who is currently receiving
14 service-connected disability for radiation exposure, so I
15 hope you take my words as neither naive nor ill-informed.

16 I would like to address the issue of what we
17 have done to Nevada, what we would continue doing if we
18 continued production of nuclear or radioactive materials.
19 I would like you to consider that there is no stop if we
20 continue with Yucca Mountain. There is no place to put
21 the waste. There is nothing that we can do to enhance
22 life or the living chemistry of earth by continued
23 production of nuclear material. We can attempt to store

552271

24 it safely, and in so doing, we talk about increasing the
25 load of radioactive exposures to people in the
54

1 communities around or those workers on the sites.

2 If we look at the history of background
3 radiation in the United States -- and I find that there
4 is very little, if any, publicly available that has to do
5 with what the background radiation experiences have been
6 across Nevada or across this country.

7 When I was first working with it, it was the
8 standard, it was the zero point, background radiation was
9 background, and we really at that time didn't consider
10 that it was going to fluctuate much. If we look at the
11 radiation that we know is being experienced at Yucca
12 Mountain, at Beatty, at the other valleys across Nevada,
13 we see that they already exceed the average radiation
14 levels across the United States by more than is being
15 proposed as the limit by AEC on additional radiation.

16 So I think there's a sense of imbalance, as I
17 see it, that we've already, shall we say, contaminated
18 Southern Nevada, Utah and much of the earth with our
19 nuclear experiments. We are now continuing to increase
20 the rates of exposure, the rates of risk. There is no
21 way that we can continue this and continue the nuclear

552271

22 industry, the electrical production and the production of
23 wastes without continuing to increase the levels of risk
24 that all individuals on earth are exposed to, not just
25 those in Southern Nevada. So as long as we are in the

1 state of production, we are in a state of
2 self-terrorization.

3 I think I heard somebody mention a little
4 earlier -- I'm sorry I'm late -- connotations that we
5 should be aware of terrorism. Let me ask you: If any
6 foreign country had devastated as many square miles of
7 this country, made them permanently unavailable for civil
8 use, would you not stand up and attack that other
9 country? Well, that's us. We did it to ourselves. We
10 have terrorized this country. We are terrorizing this
11 country, and if we perpetuate the production of these
12 wastes, we contaminate this earth of ours and our
13 neighbors in perpetuity, and I think that's as much as I
14 need to say or want to say for the moment. If anybody
15 has questions, I'll meet them on the line.

16 Thank you very much.

[Other commenters spoke, then Mr. Laws spoke again.]

CHARLES LAWS: My name is Charles Laws,

552271

3 L-a-w-s. I spoke earlier. I spoke primarily about the
4 effects of radiation at small levels, what used to be
5 called background.

6 I was a scientist, I was trained as a
7 biochemist. In '52 I was using radioactive materials in
8 chemical studies and things like that. I'm a nuclear
9 veteran. I'm receiving disability compensation for
10 radiation exposure while in the service, so I'm not
11 either naive or uninformed about these things, as I said
12 earlier.

13 One of the things that I have noticed this
14 evening is that the process stinks. There is no
15 alternative but to reflect on the fact that I used to
16 write reports for the government agencies, and never once
17 to my knowledge was a draft carrying the same
18 connotations through to the final reports.

19 The information which we see published by DOE
20 comes from contractors who know what they're talking
21 about, but they are refined and abstracted to the point
22 that the content is lost for political, for social, for
23 economic gain or means or beliefs by the people who are
24 doing the editing and the final approvals. So when
25 somebody earlier today said, there's a lot of good

145

552271

1 information out there and all you have to do is read it
2 to find out what's there, I don't believe it for a
3 minute. There may be ten miles high in final reports,
4 but the basic documentation, the basic information has
5 been concealed, very adequately, I think, in many cases,
6 so the process stinks.

7 Part of the process is that you focus on a
8 detail and you forget the system, you forget what it
9 belongs to, that it belongs to us. Earlier I spoke about
10 the fact that in the name of national security we have
11 destroyed hundreds of square miles of America. If
12 somebody else had done that to us, we would be calling
13 them the terrorists and waging direct full war against
14 them. Well, we were the terrorists, we have had this
15 ignorance with us, we have perpetuated this ignorance,
16 and it is time to step back and realize, as others have
17 mentioned tonight, that you cannot perpetuate the
18 production of this material and hope to accomplish
19 anything other than terror.

20 I have overcome terror, nuclear terror.
21 However, I've been around communities which had
22 facilities, and I have discovered that the people living

552271

23 in those communities carry with them a fear of radiation.
24 The prices, surprisingly, around some of the facilities
25 were depressed a little bit. People didn't know where to

146

1 go, didn't have much faith in what was going on. Classic
2 symptoms such as you, I think, Celia, mentioned.

3 There is traumatization that goes on when you
4 have this. There is a sense there's nothing you can do
5 about it because our government has told us about it.

6 It is time that we confront the process and
7 say, look at the system. Stop talking about waste going
8 to Yucca. My God, look at where the waste is coming
9 from. Look at the source of why waste is being generated
10 in the first place. Go back to the '50s, go back to the
11 AEC. Seek out the logics which were hoisted upon us at
12 that time which allowed this to be developed. It has to
13 stop, it just simply has to stop. It's not just no to
14 Yucca, it is no to the nuclear industry, it is no to
15 nuclear development, and if the Secretary doesn't get
16 that as part of an essential element to saying Yucca is
17 not suitable, it's because the entire nuclear industry is
18 not suitable, and we have to stop it, and we're going to
19 have to stop it from -- starting here.